

**WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:**

1           1.     An authenticating system for determining the authenticity  
2     of a product, said system comprising:  
3           an authenticator having a processing module storing authenticating  
4     data;  
5           a product having stored product data;  
6           an interface device for extracting the product data from the  
7     product, said interface device sending the product data to said  
8     authenticator;  
9           said processing module comparing the authenticating data to the  
10    product data of said product;  
11           whereby said authenticator determines that the product is authentic  
12    if the product data acceptably compares with the authenticating data.

1           2.     The authenticating system of claim 1 wherein the product  
2     data is concealed within said product.

1           3.     The authenticating system of claim 2 wherein the product  
2     data is concealed by providing extraneous data with the product data.

1           4.     The authenticating system of claim 1 wherein said interface  
2     device may extract a plurality of different types of data from said  
3     product.

1           5.     The authenticating system of claim 1 wherein the product  
2     data acceptably compares with the authenticating data by comparing a  
3     range for which the product data may fall within.

1           6.     The authenticating system of claim 1 wherein the product  
2     data acceptably compares with the authenticating data by comparing a  
3     distinct value for which the product data must attain.

1           7.     The authenticating system of claim 1 wherein:  
2                 said authenticator has an information storage module storing  
3     supplemental data;  
4                 said supplemental data being used in conjunction with the  
5     product data to compare with the authenticating data.

1           8.    The authenticating system of claim 1 wherein said  
2 authenticator emits a visual signal to indicate that the product data  
3 acceptably compares with the authenticating data.

1           9.    The authenticating system of claim 1 wherein said  
2 authenticator emits an aural signal to indicate that the product data  
3 acceptably compares with the authenticating data.

1           10.   The authenticating system of claim 1 wherein said  
2 authenticator emits a signal to indicate that the product data does not  
3 acceptably compare with the authenticating data.

1           11.   The authenticating system of claim 1 wherein the  
2 authenticator includes means to destroy the authenticating data if the  
3 authenticator is opened incorrectly.

1           12. A method of determining an authenticity of a product, said  
2 method comprising the steps of:  
3           programming an authenticator with authenticating data used to  
4 determine the authenticity of the product;  
5           extracting product data from the product by an interface device;  
6           transmitting the product data to the authenticator;  
7           comparing, by the authenticator, the authenticating data with the  
8 product data extracted from the product;  
9           determining, by the authenticator, if the product data acceptably  
10 compares with the authenticating data.

1           13. The method of determining an authenticity of a product of  
2 claim 12 wherein the step of programming an authenticator includes  
3 storing supplementary data within the authenticator, said supplementary  
4 data being added with the product data to compare with the  
5 authenticating data.

1           14. The method of determining an authenticity of a product of  
2 claim 12 further comprising, after the step of determining, by the  
3 authenticator, if the product data acceptably compares with the  
4 authenticating data, the step of sending a signal to indicator the  
5 authenticity of the product.

1           15. The method of determining an authenticity of a product of  
2 claim 12 wherein the step of determining, by the authenticator, if the  
3 product data acceptably compares with the authenticating data includes  
4 determining if the product data falls within a specific range of values of  
5 authenticating data.

1           16. The method of determining an authenticity of a product of  
2 claim 12 wherein the authenticating data is a distinct value.

1           17. The method of determining an authenticity of a product of  
2 claim 12 further comprising, before the step of programming an  
3 authenticator, the step of concealing product data within the product.

1           18. The method of determining an authenticity of a product of  
2 claim 17 wherein the step of concealing product data includes providing  
3 extraneous data to conceal the product data.

1           19. The method of determining an authenticity of a product of  
2 claim 12 further comprising, after the step of programming an  
3 authenticator, the step of destroying the authenticating data if the  
4 authenticator is incorrectly opened.